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**DIGITAL APPLICATION OF SOCIAL STUDIES  
INSTRUCTION: A NEW VISION**

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**Abstract**

*The paper investigated the implementation of Social Studies curriculum in the age of digital education in Nigeria. The ongoing implementation process in university Social Studies appears to be devoid of the deployment of essential digital devices for use by teachers. Instruction is considered flexible and accessible when digital devices are involved in delivery of instruction to students with the goal of improving classroom performance and test scores. Despite the advantage of digital education, most teachers and students are not frequently and promptly using digital devices to facilitate instruction and learning. The objective of the paper is therefore to empirically investigate the relationship between teacher and students' use of digital devices during implementation of university Social Studies curriculum. The paper employed descriptive survey involving correlational and ex-post facto designs respectively. Four hundred teachers and students were sampled. Questionnaire was the instrument used to collect data which were analyzed by the use of mean score, standard deviation and Pearson ( $r$ ) statistics. The study found out that using digital devices lead to efficient and effective delivery of instruction. Students who use digital devices in their study have shown enhanced academic achievement. Therefore, the paper concludes that*

*using digital devices simplifies instruction, aid comprehension, making the teaching and learning in Social Studies exciting and interesting. The paper recommends that Social Studies education teachers should deploys digital devices for instruction and students should use digital devices for their learning.*

**Keywords:** Implementation, Social Studies, Curriculum, Digital, Education.

## **Introduction**

Most recently, education in Nigeria has experienced a paradigm shift in the implementation of most education programmes in the school system which includes Social Studies education. Social Studies education could adapt to the new wave of curriculum implementation processes in classrooms involving the use of digital driven apparatus. This is because of Social Studies interactive and integrative nature. It is also assumed that the Social Studies education curriculum implementation process strive in an environment that recognizes its utilization. The influence of digital communication tools for Social Studies education implementation is based on global reaction to education practice which is seen as a response to world driven by digital operation. It is a common knowledge that nearly all spheres of life endeavours has become digitally compliant. Therefore, the application of digital devices for education practice is a welcome development. Thus, its use in the implementation process for the Social Studies education curriculum should not be ignored. Rather, digital use should be a concern for both faculty and students members at the universities in Nigeria.

Akinlaye (2003) supports the use of digital tools for the teaching and learning of Social Studies education at all levels where Social Studies education curriculum is being implemented. He has shown that introducing and intimating the individual to the wider communities is made possible through the agency of digital education. He believed that gaining access to the global communities is one of the basic rationales for the teaching and learning of Social

Studies in most school classroom in Nigeria. In addition, Akinlaye was of the view that platforms created by digital technologies can foster the possibilities for a majority of students to reach the world from where they are. This will encourage the social interaction, integration and socialization involving varied medium of communication with their counterparts in other parts of the globe. It thus suggests that the age of digital has made learning to become a global experience.

Reaching the world through computers fitted with Internet connection according to Mezieobi, Fubara and Mezieobi (2008) enable learners to gain the knowledge of the world's problems. This is because, the focal point of the age of digital education is the use of computers and Internet browsing. The authors argued that digital use by the teacher will create the ability of the discipline to impart in learners the knowledge and make the learner to understand the world and its problems. Hence, digital appliances are described as an electronic technology that generates, stores and process information mainly for positive or negative use. It is basically operated through the pressing of digits or number, hence the name digital. However, in this case using digital facilities by faculty and learners for Social Studies curriculum implementation at whatever level to facilitate learning among undergraduates in a select university would be a positive venture. It is against this background the paper has examined the role of digital tools such as computers and Internet services for the implementation process of the Social Studies curriculum at the university level.

The deployments of digital facilities/tools are intended to encourage global discourse among faculty and students' members. The utilization of digital tools for course facilitation leaves much to be desired. Whereas, where digital facilities are utilized promptly and regularly, it is capable of increasing input as well as increase productivity on the task performances of faculty and learners. It could also improve academic performance of a majority of learners. Despite the encouraging effect of the age of digital, most department in a number of universities in some parts of Nigeria are lagging behind in its application for curriculum implementations. This is more so as most people in the modern day society have cultivated

the attitude of hooking up to the social media for information gathering and general communication. Most youth in tertiary institution are known to always hooking on to the android phone especially for social media gossips. Given the fact that Social Studies is concerned with shaping and instilling good attitudes and values, there is thus the need to deliberately influence Social Studies students on the need to use their ICT or digital apparatus of mobile phones, laptop/desktop to aid their academic pursuit. This observation prompted the question that: would there be any relationship between digital education and academic performance of university students in Social Studies education in Nigeria?

Digital education has become a medium of course facilitation in many school discipline and Social Studies education should not be an exception. The University of Edinburgh (2018) says that “digital education is the innovative use of digital tools and technologies during teaching and learning”. The concept implies that digital education is relevant to the implementation of school curriculum. This is because tools and technologies driven by digital could be deployed to facilitate a given curriculum, including the Social Studies curriculum. These tools among others are the computers and Internet that can be used to engage learners in an academic environment either in a face-to-face interaction or through online activities respectively. In some parts of Nigeria, particular in the universities, the use of digital learning tools has been embraced as a large number of school such as the University of Ibadan, University of Lagos, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ife, to name but a few, have turned to digital products and system in course of curriculum implementation in various subject-matters.

The study by Adedoja and Abimbade (2016) found that digital education is compatible with the implementation of school subject because it is a response to innovation in the changes taking place in the school system. The authors revealed that “current instructional deliveries favour the use of mobile (digital tools) technologies. The finding in their study is consistent with the fact that digital carries inherent potentials and benefits. Its tools are portable, flexible, cost effective and they are easy to be put to use. Also, they have added values to the learning environment because

they create excitement to learners. This is to the effect that learners' anticipation is aroused and increase interest for learning. Thus, using digital learning tools in the teaching and learning of Social Studies education can correlate many aspects of the objectives for introducing the subject in school curriculum. One of such objectives is to keep abreast with ever changing environment. Unlike most textbooks, digital devices are veritable source of latest information on issues.

The use of digital model for learning in school was investigated in the study by Udouo and Ojo (2016) in Obia-kpor local government area of Rivers State, Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to identify the extent of use of new media and to find out challenges experienced while using new media (digital models) for learning in schools in the local government area. The study adopted survey and quasi-experiment as research design. The population of the study stood at 5,609 representing the entire population of the students and heads of school studied. Sample size of 568 was used in the study. Finding showed that some of the schools were truly new media (digital) based but under-utilized by the students in learning. The implication of the finding suggests that the knowledge and skill needed to operate digital model such as the computer and Internet browsing is lacking, thereby it affects the level of interest in the use of digital learning tools by most students. It means that orientation and training is to be deliberately initiated in order to inspire the students towards the use of new media for learning.

Digital devices are essential part of the digital education, any of which can be relied upon to provide instruction, and as well as can be used to receive instructional delivery. Digital devices examples include devices such as the following; Desktop computers, Laptop computers, Mobile phones, Tablets computers, E-reader, Storage devices such as flash drives, Input devices such as keyboards, mouse, and scanners, and Output devices such as printers and speakers.

Each and or all of the devices are useful for student learning as well as for instructional transmission and face-to-face content delivery respectively, by members of faculty in a lecture setting. Any

of the device can be drafted by a teacher for the purpose of programme instruction. In addition, digital devices are used in the education setting because digital devices in education provide opportunities for students to learn, create, share and collaborate beyond the classroom. On the part of faculty members, digital device enable the teacher to interface with students via social media platforms such as facebook, whatsapp, email, which are flexible means of interaction and instruction. The devices make it flexible to share students' work, allowing students to get feedback and input from their peer, parents and teachers. Most of these devices are easy to carry and are not too costly to purchase, thereby it means some of the devices could be readily available for use by both teacher and students for instructional interaction in Social Studies lessons.

The assumption that students' academic performance could improve when digital devices are deployed for instructional delivery may not be unfounded. The linear correlation was reported in the study by Basri, Alandejani and Al-Madani (2018). The authors explore the adoption of information communication technology by the universities and the impact it makes on the university students' academic performance. The study was carried out in Saudi universities. The study also examined the moderators' effect of gender, GPA and students' majors on the relationship between ICT and academic achievement. By using a quantitative research approach and a sample of 1000 students, data were collected about the ICT adoption in universities and the relative performance of students belonging to four Saudi universities. Structured equation modeling was chosen to determine the validity of the research model. The Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS), specially used for structural equation modeling and path analysis was used as the research tool. The findings revealed that there exists a relationship between ICT adoption and academic performance in a conservative environment. The implication of the finding points to the fact that digital education has brought about innovation to teaching and learning. It is found that the use of digital devices do simplify instruction, makes the learning process enjoyable, thereby stimulating cognitive ability. Hence, it could result to an improved

academic achievement among undergraduate students in those universities employed for the investigation. The evidence found in several studies is further subjected to testing to find out whether the experience is the same among students in the selected samples from the investigated universities by analyzing the following parameters.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The general objective of the study is to establish the linear correlate between digital education and academic performance of Social Studies students in universities. The specific objectives are to:

- i. investigate the extent to which the deployment of digital facilities such as computers and Internet connection enhance the implementation process of Social Studies curriculum at the university level.
- ii. find out whether the deployment of the digital education correlate improved academic performance of students in university Social Studies in Nigeria.
- iii. encourage academic use of digital devices in order to discourage negative use such as time wasting, social media chat, etc.

### **Research Questions**

The study posited two research questions.

- i. Would the deployment of digital devices influence the implementation of Social Studies curriculum by teachers at the universities level?
- ii. Would the deployment of the use of digital devices by students improve academic performance?

### **Hypotheses**

Two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study.

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between teachers' use of digital devices and the implementation of Social Studies curriculum

at the university level.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between students' use of digital devices and academic performance in university Social Studies.

### **Methods**

In order to investigate this problem, the paper employed the descriptive survey involving the correlation and ex-post facto research design respectively. The design was used to interact with four hundred undergraduates; in Delta State University (75), Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (200), and University of Uyo (125). The Social Studies digital education questionnaire (SSDEQ) was the main instrument for data collection; while students' results were used for the academic performance data. Both generated data were further subjected to both the mean calculation at 2.50 benchmark. Pearson r was used at 0.05 level of significance for hypotheses testing. Findings constitute the discussion on the study.

### **Results**

**Research Question 1:** Would the deployment of digital devices influence the implementation process of Social Studies curriculum at the university level in Nigeria? In order to measure this problem, the mean score analysis was employed at 2.5 mean benchmark for decision making either to reject or accept opinions of respondents that were administered the questionnaire used for data collection. The result is presented in Table 1.



**Table 1: Analysis of Mean and Standard Deviation of Teacher use of Digital Devices on Implementation of Curriculum in University Social Studies**

S/N	Items	N	Rating Scale				Total score	X	SD	Remark
			SA	A	D	SD				
1	Use of desktop computer	400	130	170	60	40	400	2.97	0.74	Accept
2	Use of laptop computers	400	150	178	48	24	400	3.28	0.82	Accept
3	Use of mobile phones	400	205	105	40	50	400	3.16	0.79	Accept
4	Tablet computer	400	120	80	140	60	400	2.65	0.66	Accept
5	e-readers usage	400	40	75	210	75	400	2.15	0.53	Reject
6	Use of flash drive	400	25	55	100	220	400	1.71	0.42	Reject
7	Use of keyboard, mouse and scanners	400	20	30	250	100	400	1.92	0.48	Reject
8	Use of printer for photo-copying of instructional materials	400	60	45	95	200	400	1.91	0.47	Reject

Source: Field survey by the researcher, Osah (2021)

Table 1 presents result on the variable of teacher use of digital devices as they are deployed for the Social Studies curriculum implementation. Eight items were measured using the mean score statistics to determine the use of the listed devices for the teaching of Social Studies in universities classroom. Results indicate that four of the items pass the mean benchmark of 2.5. These are; teachers’ use of desktop computer (mean =2.97, SD =0.74); teachers’ use of laptop computer (mean =3.28, SD =0.82); teachers use of mobile phones (mean =3.16, SD = 0.70); teachers’ use of tablet computer (mean =2,65, SD =0.66); while the rest four items fall short of the mean 2.5 benchmark, which means that teachers use four of the devices for the implementation of Social Studies curriculum during the teaching and learning in the classroom. This result answers the question that teachers use some of the fundamental digital devices for curriculum implementation in university Social Studies.

**Research Question 2:** Would the deployment of digital devices by students improve academic performance? The result is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Analysis of Mean and Standard Deviation of Students use of Digital Devices and Academic Performance in University Social Studies**

S/N	Items	N	Rating Scale				Total score	X	SD	Remark
			SA	A	D	SD				
1	Use of desktop computer	400	20 80	28 84	300 600	52 52	400 816	2.04	0.51	Reject
2	Use of laptop computers	400	250 100	80 240	30 60	40 40	400 1340	3.35	0.83	Accept
3	Use of mobile phones	400	300 200	50 150	30 60	20 20	400 1430	3.37	0.89	Accept
4	Tablet computer	400	80 320	40 120	200 400	80 80	400 920	2.30	0.57	Reject
5	e-readers usage	400	10 40	30 90	280 560	30 30	400 720	1.80	0.45	Reject
6	Use of flash drive	400	50 200	100 300	150 300	100 100	400 900	2.25	0.56	Accept
7	Use of keyboard, mouse and scanners	400	40 160	60 180	220 440	80 80	400 860	2.15	0.53	Reject
8	Use of printer for photo-copying of instructional materials	400	48 192	62 186	150 300	140 140	400 818	2.04	0.51	Reject

Source: Field survey by the researcher

Table 2 shows the result of the variable dealing on students' use of digital devices in relation to improve academic performance in university Social Studies. Based on the mean aggregate, it was observed that students are acquainted with the use of laptop computer ( $\bar{x} = 3.35$ ,  $SD = 0.83$ ); mobile phone ( $\bar{x} = 3.37$ ,  $SD = 0.89$ ), and flash drive ( $\bar{x} = 2.25$ ,  $SD = 0.56$ ) respectively. The result implies that other items such as desktop computer, tablet computer, E-readers, amongst other items in the list are not frequently used by students. This result has answered the question that digital devices contribute to the academic performance of university students in Social Studies education in the study area. However, further testing is carried on the hypotheses of the study

to determine the coefficient of the existing relationship between variables.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant relationship between teachers’ use of digital devices and implementation of curriculum in university Social Studies.

**Table 3: Analysis of Pearson (r) of Teacher use of Digital Devices and Curriculum Implementation in University Social Studies**

Variables	N	df	Cal R	Crit. R	Level of Sign	Decision
Digital Devices						
Curriculum Implementation in university Social Studies	400	398	0.56	.195	0.05	Rejected (significance)

N= 400, df =398,  $p \leq 0.05$  Level of Significance

The tested null hypotheses on Table 3 produced a significant relationship between the variable of teacher use of digital devices and curriculum implementation in university Social Studies. The implication of this result indicates that digital devices consisting of desktop computer, laptop computer, mobile phones and Tablet computers are valuable tools for curriculum implementation in university teaching and learning of Social Studies education. This finding is further discussed in the study.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant relationship between students’ use of digital devices and academic performance in university Social Studies.

**Table 4: Analysis of Pearson (r) of Students' use of Digital Devices and Curriculum Implementation in University Social Studies**

Variables	N	df	Cal R	Crit. R	Level of Sign	Decision
Digital Devices						
Curriculum Implementation in university Social Studies	400	398	0.74	.195	0.05	Rejected (significance)

N= 400, df =398,  $p \leq 0.05$  Level of Significance

The result of analysis on the stated null hypothesis was rejected, meaning there is a significant relationship between the variable of students' use of digital and academic performance among university students in Social Studies. The result is significant at N=400, df=398, calculated R =0.74 higher than 0.05 level on the critical table value at .195 respectively. The result connotes that the use of digital devices such as laptop computer, mobile phones and flash drive are significant for the learning of Social Studies by universities students. This finding is further discussed in literature sought for the study.

### **Discussions**

Findings in the study are discussed from the view of studies that relate with the variables under consideration. Finding in hypothesis 1 indicated that there is a significant relationship between digital use by teacher and curriculum implementation in university Social Studies. This finding aligned with the study by Udoudo and Ojo (2016) study. They found out that schools in Obio-Akpor local government area were truly new media based. It means that teachers in many schools are employing digital devices for the implementation of school curriculum. The challenge discovered in their study was that the media (digital) based facilities/devices were being underutilized by a majority of students in learning.

Hence, the need to encourage the continual use of digital devices for learning is now a paradigm for students and particularly for teachers in universities Social Studies, who are saddled with content implementation of the subject matter. Tunmibi, Aregbesola, Adejobi and Ibrahim (2015) supported the result of the hypothesis. Their study which is titled “impact of e-learning and digitalization in primary and secondary schools” found that both students and teachers were respondents of the survey agreed that the application of digital devices in schools help to promote an efficient, effective and productive way of teaching. Thus, its adoption for curriculum implementation has become a value added phenomenon in the teaching and learning in schools but particularly in the universities.

The second hypothesis stated that there is significant relationship between digital use by students and academic performance in university Social Studies. The adoption of digital devices by students correlates their improved academic achievement. The finding agreed with the study by Basri, Alandejani and Almadani (2018). The authors whose investigation focuses on “ICT adoption impact on students’ academic performance” found that there exists a relationship between ICT adoption and academic performance in a conservative environment. In addition, the authors found that the adoption of digital devices (ICT) resulted in the improvement of students (male and female) performance in test scores. Similarly, Khan, Ameen and Rafique’s (2019) study on the impact of using personal digital device (PDD) on university students’ academic performance involving 240 Master degree students found that the frequent use of smart phones, mobile phones, laptops as personal digital devices helped the students to improve on their English language skills. The implication of the finding is that students’ use of personal digital devices correlates their academic performance. Therefore, its importance for teacher and students to deploy the use of personal digital devices for the implementation of the Social Studies curriculum at all levels of education. The satisfaction of higher academic performance will automatically discourage the attitude of using digital devices for negative tendencies such as time wasting, social media chat, pornography and other immoral acts.

**Conclusion**

Social Studies curriculum is implemented by teachers who specialized in the subject-matter. The adoption of digital devices is seen as an innovative paradigm shift in the teaching and learning of many school subjects, including the Social Studies programme. The use of digital technological driven devices is shown to lead to efficient and effective delivery of instruction and that because of its flexibility, storage capacity and cost-effective, its use by teachers has become a new paradigm. Also, students' who frequently adopt the devices have shown improve academic achievement because they could access instructional materials by operating any of the relevant devices. The use of smart phone, the mobile phone and laptops are frequently employed by students for social interaction which when directed to learning could lead to improved academic performance. Therefore, the paper concluded that adoption of digital devices is shown to simplify instruction, makes the teaching and learning in Social Studies exciting and interesting. The attendant higher academic performance will discourage negative use of digital devices.

**Recommendations**

The paper recommends that teachers in Social Studies education should deploy digital devices for classroom interaction to encourage effective and efficient implementation of the Social Studies curriculum at the university level of education. Also, students should adopt the use of digital devices for their learning; as the Internet have been shown to increase the potentials of academic improvement among university students. Therefore, while using the devices for social interaction, a greater proportion of the air-time should be directed to education purpose in and out of the classroom, since it can be used to promote academic performance for the students in university Social Studies. Students should abstain from using digital devices for time wasting, idle social media chat and other immoralities.

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